

**PM's banker brother's fate a bellwether if PR wins GE13, says ST
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KUALA LUMPUR, March 25 — What happens to Datuk Seri Nazir Razak should the opposition pact take Putrajaya in Election 2013 could also spell the future of Malaysia Inc under Pakatan Rakyat (PR), Singapore's Straits Times reported today.

The head of Malaysia's second-largest bank has helped turn CIMB into a regional banking powerhouse over the past few years, which many believe is due to his kinship with Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak, as has been the case with many of the country's tycoons who have benefited from their close ties with the ruling Barisan Nasional (BN) for the past five decades since Independence, the newspaper's senior correspondent, Anita Gabriel wrote in several analytical pieces.

"An opposition victory would be instinctively traumatic on markets, as it would be traumatic for the corporate sector," another unnamed top banker was quoted saying.

Nazir told Bloomberg TV recently that his brother has "a very clear path forward" in terms of transforming the Malaysian economy.

"If there's a change there, it would disappoint investors and they would have to relook at their view of Malaysia," he told Bloomberg's Susan Li in Hong Kong.

Anita wrote that a massive shake-up of the country's corporate scene, widely known as Malaysia Inc, could see a large-scale drastic change should PR win in the general elections just weeks away and that a number of its wealthy elite were changing tack as they sniffed the political change in the wind.

Malaysia's richest men — the Kuok Group's Tan Sri Robert Kuok, telecoms tycoon T. Ananda Krishnan, gaming and properties mogul Tan Sri Lim Kok Thay, Hong Leong's Tan Sri Quek Leng Chan and YTL's Tan Sri Francis Yeoh — have been systematically taking their investments abroad since 1969, when the BN first lost its parliamentary supermajority.

She noted too that the tycoons have also been hedging bets on the domestic front, pointing to Malaysia's 10th richest man, Tan Sri Vincent Tan's acquisition of prime freehold land in PR-run Penang, through the magnate's flagship Berjaya Group, as an example.

"When a system changes and the rules of the game change, players who have sunk in so much in investments have to adapt," political analyst Khoo Kay Peng was quoted saying.

CIMB too has appeared to bat for the DAP, having organised a roadshow for its publicity chief Tony Pua to meet foreign investors and detail the opposition party's plans for business in Malaysia if it comes to power, Gabriel wrote, adding that the banking giant was criticised in some inner circles for that move.

The newspaper correspondent said the CIMB move was testament to Nazir's professionalism and political neutrality even though just last week the latter was seen to have made a pitch for his brother's political bid to stay in power.

"If there's a change there, it would disappoint investors and they would have to relook at

their view of Malaysia,” the banker told Bloomberg TV’s Susan Li in an interview in Hong Kong on March 21.

Citing industry observers, Anita wrote that a new regime would likely draw up new rules to conducting business in Southeast Asia’s third largest economy.

“Definitely, there will be a major shift,” PKR’s strategy director Rafizi Ramli was quoted saying, of the “distinctive difference in approach” between BN and PR.

He was reported to have commented on the restructuring of government-linked companies (GLCs) to focus on key strategic areas such as utility or major economic activities without stifling competition or becoming an “impediment to entrepreneurs”.

But Anita wrote that implementation of PR policy changes would be gradual rather than overnight as the new ruling elite would not wish to upset or send any unfavourable signal to domestic and foreign investors.

“Everything is not going to change simply because the government has changed,” said a corporate player.

The track record of Malaysia’s opposition parties in the four states they currently control — Selangor, Penang, Kedah and Kelantan — also indicate a gradual change should PR take federal power, Anita pointed out.

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